



February 9, 2011

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Written testimony in OPPOSITION of Senate bill 57,  
AN ACT EXPANDING THE BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION SYSTEM

To: The Hon. Edward Meyer, Co-Chairman, The Hon. Richard Roy, Co-Chairman, The Hon. Andrew M. Maynard, Vice-Chairman, The Hon. Paul Davis, Vice-Chairman, The Hon. Andrew W. Roraback, Ranking Member, The Hon. Clark J. Chapin, Ranking Member, and the members of the Environment Committee

Good afternoon Chairman Meyer, Chairman Roy, and members of the Environment Committee. My name is Harry Garafalo and I am the owner/operator of the ShopRite supermarkets of Milford, West Haven, Hamden, and Stratford.

Wakefern/ShopRite's dedication to environmental stewardship is multifaceted and includes Wakefern's Elizabeth, New Jersey, recycling plant, which since the 1970's has operated 16 hours a day, six days a week. The facility recycles a variety of materials including white pharmacy pill bottles, plastic grocery bags, corrugated cardboard, and paper. In 2010, ShopRite recycled 110,000 tons of cardboard, 2,751 tons of plastic film and bags, 812 tons of newspaper, 378 tons of office paper, 102 tons of metal, 1,975 tons of waxed corrugated, and 181 tons of hard plastic.

In 1992, ShopRite implemented a bag re-use program. One of the first of its kind in the Northeast, customers who re-use their plastic, paper or any other re-usable shopping bag are rebated \$.02 per bag off of their shopping order. In May 2008, we started rebating \$.05 to those customers choosing to use non-disposable bags. In 2010 more than 55 million bags were reused by ShopRite customers, saving them over \$2.6 million off their grocery bill. In fact, in the last three years ShopRite customers have kept over 125 million bags out of landfills while fewer resources were needed to create new bags.

It is programs such as these that help better the environment.

Expanding Connecticut's bottle bill to include juice, tea, sports drink and other beverages not currently covered by the bottle law will have a detrimental impact on my stores and it will impede all recycling progress that has been made in Connecticut.

To comply with the expansion of the bottle law, I would be forced to expand my bottle rooms, purchase new reverse vending machines, and dedicate current store personnel to attend the bottle redemption rooms. This may contribute to longer lines for my customers, and ultimately take away from their shopping experience.

Instead of expanding the bottle law, we should look at creating a curbside community recycling program. This type of program would be clean and easy for the consumer, while remaining cost efficient and decreasing the amount of litter in our communities. Curbside recycling programs encompass all types of recyclable materials as opposed to just beverage containers. Recycling also encourages everyone in the community to do their part to take care of the environment.

I urge you to oppose Senate bill 57 and expanding the bottle law. Instead, I ask that you consider launching a curbside recycling program. I am committed to working with the State of Connecticut to achieve environmentally sustainable goals for the betterment of all who live and work here.